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## CONCERNING FITZHERBERT'S BOOK OF HUSBANDRY

In an article in a recent number of *Modern Philology*,<sup>1</sup> W. H. Hulme assumes in no uncertain tones that the long description of a good horse in Fitzherbert's *Book of Husbandry* "is derived with considerable additions and modifications" from one of two similar descriptions in English, represented respectively by a Lansdowne and Cotton manuscript of the British Museum. The similarity lies in the comparison of the characteristics of a horse with those of other animals and a woman. The shorter version found in the manuscripts is not confined to England, as Mr. Hulme seems to assume. Reinhold Köhler has pointed out early French, German, and Dutch analogues of the Lansdowne version, which was known to him.<sup>2</sup> If this peculiar type of literature is widely spread, it can hardly be called popular, or an "interesting bit of farriers' lore" as Mr. Hulme puts it, as it was evidently suggested by a better-known intellectual *tour de force*, the description of the beauties of a woman, of which Köhler has collected a large number of examples.<sup>3</sup>

The description in the *Book of Husbandry* is so amplified with its fifty-four qualities of a horse for comparison, against the eighteen to be found in the next largest list in a Dutch composition, that one must regard this elaborate scheme as an attempt of Fitzherbert, or of his immediate authority, to include in this fanciful comparison every good characteristic of a horse noted in veterinary handbooks. In the chapter, "De cognitione pulcritudinis corporis equi," in *De medicina equorum* of Jordanus Ruffus, the allusions to characteristics in other animals are slight and adventitious,<sup>4</sup> and the translators of the work into Italian, French, and Provençal followed their Latin text closely.<sup>5</sup> Perhaps an examination of later veterinary works will show the beginning of the tendency, which in Fitzherbert's book subordinates the whole subject to the desire of making whimsical classifications, a thing which would be incongruous in a technical work.

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<sup>1</sup> Vol. VI, 129-32.

<sup>2</sup> *Kleinere Schriften*, III, 33.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, 22 ff., 418; cf. F. Liebrecht, *Germania*, XXXIII, 251; *Le débat des hérauts d'armes*, ed. Pannier and Meyer, 3, 129.

<sup>4</sup> Chap. iv, *Jordanus Ruffi calabriensis Hippiatria*, ed. J. Molin, Patavia, 1818.

<sup>5</sup> G. de Gregorio, *Zeit. f. rom. Phil.*, XXIX, 566, 575; *Romania*, XXXIII, 375; Meyer, *Rom.*, XXIII, 351, 356, 357.